

DPD Recommendations for 2009 Comprehensive Plan Policy Docket June 2009

INTRODUCTION

The following recommendations are intended only to determine whether proposals meet the intended purposes of the Comprehensive Plan and the criteria Council has adopted to identify proposals that are appropriate for inclusion in the Plan. This report does not consider the merits or value of the individual proposals; executive staff will conduct that level of analysis for all of the items identified by resolution on the policy docket.

- 1. Proposed Amendment:** New policy to reduce light pollution. Establish a working group to recommend strategies to reduce light pollution.

Proponents: Jeannie Hale and Jorgen Bader

Analysis: There may be ways, other than amending the Comprehensive Plan, to address the concerns expressed in this proposal. For instance, the proposal suggests using design guidelines and voluntary programs, neither of which would require a policy statement in the Comprehensive Plan. It is also possible that City departmental practices and development standards could address the concerns raised by the proposal.

The proposed amendment may not be practical for consideration in this year's Comp Plan amendment process, since the proposal calls for convening a citizens' working group to make recommendations about night-time light in the city. If such a committee were formed under the City's auspices, adoption of a policy prior to reviewing that group's conclusions and recommendations would not be productive.

Recommendation: Do not place this item on the policy docket for 2009. If an advisory committee is established to make recommendations about light pollution in the city, consider whether those recommendations warrant inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan at that time.

- 2. Proposed Amendment:** Rainier Beach Urban Village Boundary Change. Adjust the boundary of the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village to include the area south of S. Henderson St. between MLK Way S and the Chief Sealth Trail.

Proponent: Matt Wasse

Analysis: This amendment is appropriate for the Comprehensive Plan because it requests a change to a boundary that is established in the Comprehensive Plan. To

carry out the anticipated zoning change in the light rail station area, the area would need to be included within the urban village boundary, which can only be accomplished through a Comp Plan amendment.

The amendment appears to conform with state and City law, although a more thorough analysis of the proposal relative to the City's zoning criteria is warranted.

The amendment is consistent with the overall objectives of the Comp Plan; however, since the proposal would affect a specific neighborhood plan, the amendment will need to be considered in light of that neighborhood's vision.

Recommendations:

A) Place this item on the policy docket for consideration in 2009.

B) Require the project applicant to consult with the Rainier Beach community to determine whether this proposal is consistent with the neighborhood's vision; and require the applicant to submit an environmental checklist assessing the likely environmental impacts of this proposed amendment.

3. Proposed Amendment: Potential North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan Changes. Establish a placeholder for consideration of Comprehensive Plan amendments proposed through the North Beacon Hill neighborhood plan update process, to the extent a Comp Plan change is needed, and is ready for action in 2010.

Proponent: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: At this time, there is no specific policy proposal for the neighborhood plan, but the ongoing process to update the neighborhood plan that is expected to be complete before the end of the 2009 amendment cycle could result in suggestions for changing some of the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Placing this on the policy docket preserves the possibility that City Council could consider Comp Plan recommendations that emerge from the neighborhood plan update process in the current Comp Plan amendment cycle.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

4. Proposed Amendment: Potential North Rainier Neighborhood Plan Changes. Establish a placeholder for consideration of Comprehensive Plan amendments proposed through the North Rainier neighborhood plan update process, to the extent a Comp Plan change is needed and is ready for action in 2010.

Proponent: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: At this time, there is no specific policy proposal for the neighborhood plan, but the ongoing process to update the neighborhood plan that is expected to be

complete before the end of the 2009 amendment cycle could result in suggestions for changing some of the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Placing this on the policy docket preserves the possibility that City Council could consider Comp Plan recommendations that emerge from the neighborhood plan update process in the current Comp Plan amendment cycle.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

5. Proposed Amendment: Potential MLK@Holly (Othello) Neighborhood Plan Changes. Establish a placeholder for consideration of Comprehensive Plan amendments proposed through the MLK at Holly (Othello) neighborhood plan update process, to the extent a Comp Plan change is needed and is ready for action in 2010.

Proponent: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: At this time, there is no specific policy proposal for the neighborhood plan, but the ongoing process to update the neighborhood plan that is expected to be complete before the end of the 2009 amendment cycle could result in suggestions for changing some of the goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Placing this on the policy docket preserves the possibility that City Council could consider Comp Plan recommendations that emerge from the neighborhood plan update process in the current Comp Plan amendment cycle.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

6. Proposed Amendment: Amend the Roosevelt Neighborhood Planning Element and the FLUM in the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village in anticipation of zoning proposals recommended by the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association in their revised neighborhood plan, to be analyzed by the Department of Planning and Development.

Proponent: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: The proposed changes have been proposed by the executive and are based on the neighborhood's recommendations to amend zoning in the urban village, particularly near the planned light rail station. The neighborhood made extensive recommendations about zoning changes, but those recommendations have yet to be analyzed by DPD. Detailed analysis of the neighborhood's recommendations could lead to suggestions for further zoning changes that may require amendments to the urban village boundary or the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map. At this time, no specific locations have been identified that could be affected. The proposals depend on analysis outside the review of the Comprehensive Plan process.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009, but recognize that the timing of analysis for the proposals could cause them to be deferred to a future amendment cycle.

7. Proposed Amendment: Shorelines Master Program. Amend goals and policies to address ecological protection and restoration, preparation of a shoreline restoration plan, and new organization of policies.

Proponents: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: Seattle is updating its Shorelines Master Program (SMP) pursuant to a state mandate. For updates to occur by the state's December 2010 deadline, Comprehensive Plan goals and policies must be revised to support legislative changes that will protect and restore the ecological function of Seattle's shorelines.

The SMP consists of both policies and regulations. The policy portion of the SMP is contained in the Comprehensive Plan, and therefore changes to SMP policies need to be recorded in the Comp Plan. DPD is planning to have a draft version of the Code amendments available by the end of 2009, so that those will be available for review along with Council's review of the policy recommendations.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

8. Proposed Amendment: Amend the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) within the South Downtown Study Area to redesignate areas east of Interstate 5 between S. Main St. and S. Dearborn St.; and west of I-5 between S. Dearborn and the urban center's southern boundary from Commercial/Mixed Use to Downtown Mixed Residential and Downtown Mixed Commercial.

Proponents: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: The proposed FLUM amendments are part of a broad study of ways to encourage housing and job development in the South Downtown area. City staff and members of the communities within the International District and the Little Saigon neighborhoods have been working on ways to accommodate growth in this part of the Downtown Urban Center. The proposed FLUM amendment is the result of that neighborhood planning work and, like the South Downtown amendments adopted in 2008, is consistent with the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

9. Proposed Amendment: Amend the Northgate Neighborhood Planning Element to guide design through neighborhood-specific design guidelines and give support to potential zoning changes along NE Northgate Way, provided that impacts are mitigated by property owners or developers.

Proponent: Department of Planning and Development

Analysis: City staff and community representatives have been working on measures to implement the neighborhood plan in Northgate for several years. Pending

recommendations that would allow increased development potential and employ an urban design framework to shape that development would provide new direction to development in that neighborhood and are therefore appropriate to the Comprehensive Plan

The Final EIS addressing potential zoning changes in the Northgate Way corridor will be issued soon, and other necessary analysis will be complete so that this amendment can be considered in this amendment cycle.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

10. Proposed Amendment: Adopt a policy to incorporate the precautionary principle to assess current and potential alternatives to city action.

Proponent: Steven G. Gilbert

Analysis: The proposed amendments would incorporate the "precautionary principle" into the underlying rationale for the Comprehensive Plan's Environment Element. The precautionary principle restates the historical basis for environmental policy and regulation without adding insights or, in its terminology, "rights" to a healthy and safe environment. Existing SEPA regulations, for example, are based on a de facto precautionary principle in that they require adverse environmental consequences to be identified early in the decision process and either mitigated or prevented entirely. The precautionary principle's linkage of environmental health to a citizen's rights is a bridge that already exists in the body of state and federal case law. As presented in this proposal, it seems to be a re-statement, in different form, of the Plan's core values – social equity and environmental stewardship. In 2004, the City added language to the Environment Element's introduction that specifically refers to the precautionary principle.

Recommendation: Do not place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

11. Proposed Amendment: Remove land in the Interbay area from the Ballard-Interbay Northend Manufacturing Industrial District (BINMIC). The subject land is north of Dravus to Emerson, approximately between 15th on the East, and west of 17th on the West.

Proponent: Interbay Neighborhood Association, Bruce Wynn

Analysis: The proposal would remove land from the BINMIC boundary. Zoning and the allowed uses on property are governed by the Comp Plan's mapped designations. If the proponent's intent is to construct non-industrial uses on the affected property, this change to the BINMIC map is a necessary first step. This type of change is appropriate for consideration.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

12. Proposed Amendment: Create a new element of the Comprehensive Plan entitled "Open and Participatory Government" with detailed guidelines for public access to City government operations and processes.

Proponent: Chris Leman

Analysis: The proposed amendments would include detailed guidelines for "proactively maximizing the quantity and quality of public access to [City government] documents, meetings, and other activities." By enlarging the scope beyond growth management, the proposed amendments are inconsistent with the intended purpose of the Comprehensive Plan. The City Charter and the electoral process are more appropriate venues for addressing these issues than is the Comprehensive Plan. A substantially similar amendment was proposed in 2008 and rejected by the Mayor and Council. However, the Council has convened a special committee to address these issues and will recommend steps that could improve public access to City government.

Recommendation: Do not place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

13. Proposed Amendment: Add a goal requiring a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in and through the city, and a policy favoring highway projects that produce little or no such increase.

Proponent: Chris Leman

Analysis: A substantially similar amendment from the proponent was considered in 2008 and resulted in an amendment to Transportation Policy 17 that supports promotes programs and strategies that reduce miles driven, as well as the number of car trips taken, in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In 2008, the State of Washington adopted goals for reducing VMT that apply to Seattle. SDOT is in the early stages of analyzing how the state goals apply in the city, along with technical issues related to monitoring compliance.

Recommendation: Do not place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

14. Proposed Amendment: Add a policy discouraging extra-heavy transit buses and solid waste trucks that damage Seattle's roads and bridges.

Proponent: Chris Leman

Analysis: A substantially similar amendment from the proponent was considered in 2008, and rejected by the Mayor and Council. Transportation Policy 62 calls for balancing infrastructure preservation with other priorities such as safety, accessibility and citizen satisfaction. Budgetary and programmatic decisions, which must take into account existing contractual obligations and cross-jurisdictional operations of the companies and agencies that provide services in Seattle, are a better way to determine the allowable weights of transit buses and solid waste utility vehicles.

Recommendation: Do not place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

15. Amend use of Building 9 at Sand Point: Amend Sand Point Amendments to allow housing and limited commercial use in Building 9 at the former Sand Point Naval Station.

Proponents: Councilmember Richard J. McIver, Seattle Office of Housing

Analysis: The Sand Point Amendments are, by reference, part of the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Ordinance 118622. Those amendments include a map and policies that describe expected uses of existing structures at the Sand Point facility. Consequently, the proposed amendment affecting the uses in a single building has no alternative process. Though bound separately, and generally more prescriptive and site-specific than the rest of the Comprehensive Plan, the Sand Point Amendments require a Comp Plan amendment to be changed.

Recommendations: A) Place this item on the policy docket for 2009, and B) consider removing the Sand Point Amendments from the Comprehensive Plan.

16. Proposed Amendment: Amend the FLUM to redesignate a one block area, bounded by 15th Av. NW, NW 50th St, 17th Av. NW and NW 49th St. (Nelson Chevrolet site), from Industrial to Commercial / Mixed Use.

Proponent: Urban Commercial Properties, L.L.C., Ron Sudderth

Analysis: The proposed amendments meet the criteria for further study as a potential Comp Plan amendment. Due to its location in a hub urban village, the subject area raises policy questions suitable for analysis in conjunction with the City's ongoing study of industrial lands located outside of an M/IC.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

17. Proposed Amendment: Amend the FLUM to redesignate the Yesler Terrace site from Multifamily Residential to Commercial/Mixed Use.

Proponent: Seattle Housing Authority – Judith Kilgore, Project Manager

Analysis: Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) is planning redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The current FLUM designation for the entire site is Multifamily Residential. SHA proposes changing the designation to Commercial/Mixed-Use, which would allow a wider range of uses within the redevelopment. This amendment would be necessary for some of the development scenarios SHA is considering.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

18. Proposed Amendment: Seattle Planning Commission's Affordable Housing Action Agenda. Promote housing affordability in coordination with the Seattle Transit Plan, create a new policy to consider access to transit and transportation costs when developing affordable housing, and promote attached and detached accessory dwelling units.

Proponent: Seattle Planning Commission

Analysis: The Planning Commission's February 2008 Affordable Housing Action Agenda Report developed a series of strategies for providing more affordable housing in the city. The proposed amendments and new policies are derived from two of the report's nine strategies. Proposed policies related to considering transit resources when making housing-related decisions and to expanding the range of housing choices available to Seattle residents are appropriate for consideration as amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.

19. Proposed Amendment: Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee. Add new goals to encourage cultural districts, and to allow regulations and incentives to be adopted for them.

Proponent: Councilmember Nick Licata, with Fidelma McGinn and Randy Engstrom as Co-Chairs, Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee

Analysis: The proposal is appropriate for consideration as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Current goals and policies in the Cultural Resources and Land Use Elements, and in numerous neighborhood plans express support for art, artist and space for art and culture. New goals and policies can orient existing Comp Plan support toward programs and expenditures that will protect valuable cultural resources while nurturing new ones.

Recommendation: Place this item on the policy docket for 2009.